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TRANSMITTAL OF APPEAL BRIEF (Large Entity)	Docket No. YOR920000593US1

In Re Application Of: **Alberti et al.**

Application No.	Filing Date	Examiner	Customer No.	Group Art Unit	Confirmation No.
09/752,065	12/29/2000	Calvin L. Hewitt, III	46843	3621	7741

Invention: **WEB-BASED SOLUTION FOR MANAGING INFORMATION TRADITIONALLY MANAGED WITHIN PRIVATE ELECTRONIC ENVIRONMENTS**

COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS:

Transmitted herewith in triplicate is the Appeal Brief in this application, with respect to the Notice of Appeal filed on **December 13, 2004**

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Dated: **December 13, 2004**

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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
BEFORE THE BOARD OF PATENT APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES

Appellants:	Alberti et al.	Group Art Unit:	3621
Serial No.:	09/752,065	Examiner:	Hewitt II, Clavin L.
Filed:	December 29, 2000	Appeal No.:	

For: WEB-BASED SOLUTION FOR MANAGING INFORMATION TRADITIONALLY MANAGED WITHIN PRIVATE ELECTRONIC ENVIRONMENTS

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Brief of Appellants

Dear Sir:

This is an appeal from a final rejection, dated July 14, 2004, rejecting claims 1-8, 10-33, 35-60, and 62-76. This Brief is accompanied by a transmittal letter authorizing the charging of appellants' deposit account for payment of the requisite fee set forth in 37 C.F.R. §1.17(c).

Appellants' Brief is being filed after the effective date of the final BPAI Rules, September 13, 2004 and, therefore, the format and content of Appellants' Brief is in compliance with the requirements set forth in 37 C.F.R. §41.37(c). If Appellants' Brief does not comply with the requirements set forth in 37 C.F.R. §41.37(c), appellants request notification of the

reasons for noncompliance and the opportunity to file an amended Brief pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §41.37(d).

Real Party In Interest

This application is assigned to International Business Machines Corporation by virtue of an assignment executed by the inventors on March 27, 2001 and March 29, 2001, and recorded with the United States Patent and Trademark Office at reel 011706, frame 0067, on April 6, 2001. Therefore, the real party in interest is International Business Machines Corporation.

Related Appeals and Interferences

To the knowledge of the appellants, appellants' undersigned legal representative, and the assignee, there are no other appeals, interferences, judicial proceeding that may be related to, directly affect or be directly affected by or have a bearing on the Board's decision in the instant appeal.

Status of Claims

This patent application was filed on December 29, 2000, with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. As filed, the application included seventy-six (76) claims, of which eight (8) were independent claims (i.e., claims 1, 19, 26, 44, 51-53, and 71).

In an initial Office Action dated August 27, 2003, claims 1-43, 51 and 53-70 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph as being allegedly indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which appellants regard as the invention. Claims 1-23, 25-48, 50-74, and 76 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being allegedly anticipated by Walker et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,794,207), and claims 24, 49 and 75 were rejected under U.S.C. §103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Walker et al. In Appellants' response dated December 18, 2003, dependent claims 9, 34, and 61 were deleted, and claims 1, 10-12, 26, 35-37, 51, 53, and 62-64 were amended.

In a second and final Office Action dated January 27, 2004, claims 1-8, 10-23, 25-33, 35-48, 50-60, 62-74, and 76 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being allegedly anticipated by Walker et al., and claims 24, 49, and 75 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Walker et al. In appellants' response after final dated March 26, 2004, claims 15, 40, and 67 were deleted, and independent claims 1, 19, 26, 44, 51-53, and 71 were amended.

In an Advisory Action dated April 19, 2004, the proposed amendments in appellants' response after final dated March 26, 2004, were not entered because they were allegedly deemed to not place the application in better form for appeal by materially reducing or simplifying the issues for appeal. Appellants then filed a Request for Continued Examination (RCE) to continue this application and to have claim amendments entered and considered.

The Examiner issued a First Office Action Final for the RCE dated July 14, 2004, in which claims 1-8, 10-23, 25-33, 35-48, 50-60, 62-74, and 76 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being allegedly anticipated by Walker et al. (U.S. Patent 5,794,207), and claims 24, 49, and 75 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Walker et al. In Appellants' response dated September 15, 2004, no claims were amended.

An Advisory Action issued October 6, 2004, responsive to appellants' September 15, 2004, response. The Advisory Action indicated that appellants' response has been considered but did not place the application in condition for allowance.

A Notice of Appeal to the Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences was mailed on October 14, 2004.

The status of the pending claims is therefore as follows:

Claims allowed – none;
Claims objected to – none;
Claims rejected – 1-8, 10-14, 16-33, 35-39, 41-60, 62-66, and 68-76; and
Claims canceled – 9, 15, 34, 40, 61, and 67.

Appellants are appealing the rejections of claims 1-8, 10-14, 16-33, 35-39, 41-60, 62-66, and 68-76.

Status of Amendments

Appellants proffered no amendments responsive to the final Office Action dated September 15, 2004. The claims as set out in the Appendix include all prior entered claim amendments.

Summary of the Claimed Subject Matter

In one aspect of the invention, appellants claim a method (independent claim 1), system (independent claims 26 and 51) and program storage device (independent claim 53) for managing information (see, e.g., page 3, lines 20-27). In particular, the invention relates to identifying information, via a public electronic environment, from an Enterprise Resource Planning System within a private electronic environment (see, e.g., FIGS. 1-5, and page 9, lines 6-21), managing the information using the public electronic environment off-line from the private electronic environment (see, e.g., FIG. 2, and page 10, lines 1-8), and registering the managed information, via the public electronic environment, with the private electronic environment (see, e.g., FIGS. 4 and 5, page 6, lines 22-25, and page 15, line 23 to page 16, line 2).

In a second aspect of the invention, appellants claim a method (independent claim 19), system (independent claims 44 and 52) and program storage device (independent claims 22 and 71) for managing the creation of a proposal such as a contract (see, e.g., page 6, lines 14-25). In particular, the invention relates to obtaining data for the proposal, via a public electronic environment, from an Enterprise Resource Planning System within a private electronic environment (see, e.g., FIGS. 1-5, and page 9, lines 6-21), creating the proposal using the public electronic environment disconnected from the private electronic environment (see, e.g., FIG. 2, and page 10, lines 1-8), and providing the proposal, via the public electronic environment, to the private electronic environment (see, e.g., FIGS. 4 and 5, and page 15, line 23 to page 16, line 2).

With regard to independent system claims 26 and 44 which include "means-plus-function" language, the means for obtaining data for the proposal corresponds to, for example, FIGS. 1 and 2, and public electronic environment 100 having a public server 110 with a messaging manager 204 which is accessed by a browser 108, and private electronic environment 102 having a private server 114 operating an Enterprise Resource Planning System 214. The public electronic environment includes software operable to implement, e.g., the logic of FIG. 3 for obtaining data for the proposal. The means for managing the information or means for creating the proposal corresponds to, for example, FIGS. 1 and 2, and browser 108 and server 110 in public electronic environment 100 having software operable to implement, e.g., the logic for creating and/or maintaining the proposal and accessing a main menu shown in FIG. 3B. The means for registering the managed information or for providing the proposal, via the public electronic environment to the private electronic environment corresponds to, for example, FIGS. 1 and 2, and public electronic environment 100 having a public server 110 with a messaging manager 204 and private electronic environment 102 having a private server 114 operating an Enterprise Resource Planning System 214. The public electronic environment and the private electronic environment include software operable to implement, e.g., the logic of FIG. 5, for registering the managed information or for providing the proposal to the private electronic environment.

Advantageously, aspects of the present invention minimize access to the back-end system (e.g., the ERP systems) of a private electronic environment by pre-fetching data from the back-end system and storing it on the web server of a public electronic environment. This data is then used to create and/or maintain proposals on the front-end system. This enables the information to be worked-on in a user-friendly environment, and does not require the user to stay connected to the private electronic environment. When a proposal is complete, it is then forwarded to the back-end system (e.g., private electronic environment) for contract fulfillment, invoicing and accounting.

An Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system is an integrated transaction-processing system, e.g., software system that is designed to support and automate the business processes of

medium and large businesses. Due to the sensitive nature of the types of information tracked by ERP systems, from both the buyer and seller perspective, heretofore ERP systems have resided on private, secure computer networks, and have not been accessible from public computer networks.

Grounds of Rejection to Be Reviewed On Appeal

1. Whether claims 1-8, 10-23, 25-33, 35-48, 50-60, 62-74, and 76 were anticipated by Walker et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,794,207), and therefore, properly rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b).

2. Whether claims 24, 49, and 75 were rendered obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art by Walker et al., and therefore, properly rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a).

Argument

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) Over Walker et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,794,207)

Claims 1-8, 10-18, 26-33, 35-39, 41-43, 51, 53-60, and 62-70

Reversal of the rejection of claims 1-8, 10-18, 26-33, 35-39, 41-43, 51, 53-60, and 62-70 as anticipated by Walker et al. is respectfully requested.

In the background section of Walker et al. (in columns 1-4), Walker et al. generally describe typical seller-driven experiences (the SABRE Travel Network), typical exchange-driven experiences (the NYSE or the NASDAQ), and typical buyer-driven experiences (classified want ad or a Request for Proposal).

More particularly, Walker et al. is directed to an automated buyer-driven e-commerce system operated entirely in a public network, and otherwise know in one prominent embodiment as, "priceline.com". A key element necessary to achieve a critical mass of seller participation in

such a bilateral electronic buyer-driven system is the ability to immediately bind the parties to a legal contract under the terms of the contract. See, Walker et al. at column 4, lines 1-27.

For example, consumers can go the Internet to name their price for goods and services, and sellers electronically decide whether to accept the customer's price. For example, in the priceline.com system, consumers submit a bid, known as a "conditional purchase offer," to buy goods or services -- airline tickets or automobiles, for example -- from unknown sellers at a certain price, and they guarantee the offer with a credit card. The priceline.com system presents the offers to the sellers, who then have the option of either fulfilling or rejecting the bids, or making a counteroffer. The priceline.com system then completes the transaction transferring the funds from the buyer's credit card.

The priceline.com system disclosed in Walker et al. may be summarized as follows:

Step 1 - the buyer sends an offer to the controller;
Step 2 - the controller automatically authenticates the buyer's data and sends the offer to perspective sellers;
Step 3 - seller sends acceptance (or counteroffer) to the controller; and
Step 4 - the controller automatically binds the parties (or upon acceptance of counter offer automatically binds the parties).

In contrast to the automated buyer-driven e-commerce system of Walker et al. in which the parties are automatically and immediately bound to the contract, appellants' invention is directed generally to a seller-driven system for aiding generally complex contracts that requires negotiation of the terms by performing one or more aspects of the managing information within a public electronic environment, rather than the private electronic environment.

Appellants' invention as recited in claims 1-8, 10-18, 26-33, 35-39, 41-43, 51, 53-60, and 62-70 is directed to the managing of information such as contracts. In particular, the invention relates to identifying information, for example retrieving data inherent to the contract's subject, from an Enterprise Resource Planning System in a private electronic environment, managing the

information in a public electronic environment, and registering the managed information via the public electronic environment with the private electronic environment. None of these elements or functions is disclosed or taught in Walker et al. as described in greater detail below.

For example, appellants' invention may be implemented where the subject matter of information to be managed may be a contract for software. The software may be normally paid with recurring payments while the recurring (monthly or quarterly) price varies depending on certain price drivers like the number of users or the computer processor power where the software is installed. A company may maintain records of these data in its private electronic environment (ERP system). Other possible applications are any sort of complex services or maintenance contracts such as maintenance of equipment (photocopiers, airplanes, car fleet, etc.) where the subject matter of the contract is the equipment's specifications and the maintenance service specifications.

In these cases, both the buyer and seller have an interest in negotiating an umbrella contract that covers a whole budget cycle such as for a year. In addition, the buyer may have the flexibility to change during the budget cycle, what the buyer will effectively buy as long as the request is within a threshold established when the contract was signed (e.g., in the example of a contract for software: the increase or decrease of the number of users of a certain software contract, in the example of a contract for fleet car maintenance: the increase or decrease of the number of cars or of the level of maintenance service provided). Because of the umbrella contract the buyer may receive a bottom line invoice. The administrative saving and business flexibility that both seller and buyer have, as a result of this kind of contracts, may be substantial.

The process in accordance with appellants' invention may be summarized as follows:

Step 1 - information is identified, via a public electronic environment, from an Enterprise Resource Planning system within a private electronic environment, e.g., data stored for a contract in an ERP system in a private environment is made available and accessed using a public electronic environment;

Step 2 - the information is managed, wherein one or more aspects of managing the information are performed within the public electronic environment off-line from the private electronic environment, e.g., the buyer and the seller negotiate the terms of the contract; and

Step 3 - the managed information is registered, via the public electronic environment, with the private electronic environment.

Appellants respectfully submit that since at least one feature of appellants' invention is missing from Walker et al. (and as noted below, many features are missing), Walker et al. would not have anticipated appellants' invention (nor rendered appellants' invention obvious) as claimed.

First, the system disclosed in Walker et al. is operated entirely in a public network. Thus, Walker et al. fail to disclose a private electronic environment, and in particular an ERP system operating in a private environment.

Moreover, Walker et al. address the need for security, not by operating separate private electronic and public electronic environments, but instead by using separate public online servers which are susceptible to attack. Walker et al. with reference to FIG. 20, describe a "Trusted Server Embodiment" section in column 27, lines 20-35 as follows:

> In one embodiment of the present invention, central controller 200 is separated into three distinct elements: operations server 160, trusted server 165, and bonding agency 170. Each server performs a distinct task in the process of managing CPO 100. This separation makes it more difficult for attackers to compromise the system, as they must defeat the security of three separate systems instead of one. As indicated in FIG. 20, these servers work in conjunction with buyer interface 400 and seller interface 300. Operations server 160 has the task of posting CPOs 100, and accepts all transactions previously authenticated by trusted server 165. Trusted server 165 authenticates the identity of buyers and sellers, while bonding agency 170 verifies the ability of buyers to pay and the ability of sellers to deliver on bound CPOs 100. In this embodiment, each server type may be distributed over a number of servers.

It is noted that Walker et al. refer to "Off-line Embodiments", however these embodiments are not related to private and public electronic environments as recited in the pending claims, but instead to buyers (submitting an offer) and sellers communication (an acceptance) with the central controller via other off-line "public environments" such as a telephone, a fax machine, postal mail, or other communication tools.

Second, Walker et al. fail to disclose "identifying information to be managed." As noted above, Walker et al. disclose a buyer posted offer. This offer is not to be managed but simply to be accepted by the seller (or a counteroffer to be accepted by the buyer). In addition, Walker et al. fail to disclose "identifying information, via a public electronic environment, from an enterprise resource planning system within a private electronic environment."

Third, Walker et al. fail to disclose "managing the information" within or using the public electronic environment off-line or disconnected from the private electronic environment. In appellants' invention, for example, after fetching data from the ERP system of the seller, the seller may negotiate with the buyer to plan its future needs and simulate various planning scenarios and various contract options. The information fetched will be used as a base for planning and simulation. The purpose of the planning phase is to determine the buyer requirements for the next planning cycle. In the example of the contract for software, the buyer and seller may address terms in the contract such as which new software will be installed and when, which will be removed and when, on which computer will the software be installed, how many users will use the software, and which support and maintenance services are requested and for how long. The simulation activity is in support of planning because it allows foreseeing the effect of different planning scenarios on the price/performance of the contract.

Fourth, registration of a completed agreed upon new contact in the private electronic environment is not addressed in the system disclosed in Walker et al. As noted above, the system disclosed in Walker et al. is operated entirely in a public electronic environment.

Fifth, it was the position in the final Office Action that appellants were allegedly attempting to differentiate the claims from the prior art based on the use of the term "enterprise resource management" (page 2, section 2), and that the term ERP is allegedly broad and

encompasses the automation/computerization of various standard workflow manufacturing processes (page 2, section 2), and therefore, it is the Examiner's responsibility to give claim language its broadest reasonable interpretation, and thus, the prior art (Walker et al.) allegedly continued to read on appellants' claims. However, the final Office Action fails to identify an ERP system in Walker et al. If, for the sake of argument, the controller for regulating the buyer driven transaction in Walker et al. is to be taken as the ERP system, then as noted below, the controller is not operated in a private electronic environment.

Sixth, also noted in the final Office Action (page 2, section 2) was that appellants argued that the limitation regarding private and public information is not present in the prior art of Walker et al. However, appellants did not simply argue that the limitation of private and public information is not present in the prior art of Walker et al. Instead appellants argued that Walker et al. fail to identify information from an ERP system within a private electronic environment, and further fail to identify information from an ERP system within a private electronic environment via a public electronic environment. See, page 15 of appellants' Response dated March 26, 2004.

Seventh, as noted above, it is the Examiner's position in the final Office Action (page 2, section 2) that the term "private electronic environment" is extremely broad and it is the Examiner's responsibility to give claim language its broadest reasonable interpretation, and that the central controller of Walker et al. is allegedly a private electronic environment as the public does not have access to its data stores (figure 2). However, on the next page of the final Office Action (page 3, section 4), the Examiner takes a different position. In particular, the Examiner states that Walker et al. teach a method for managing information comprising: managing information within a public environment offline from the private environment and refers to the central controller shown in figure 2. The fact is, as there is only one system in Walker et al., i.e., Walker et al. disclose a public electronic environment that has access to private information, and not disclose a private electronic environment operating an ERP.

In addition, as noted above, the private electronic environment of appellants' invention is an ERP system that contains data regarding the subject matter of the contract and not a controller

that has the purpose to regulate the buyer driven transaction as described in Walker et al. A controller, as stated in a standard English dictionary, means, "regulating mechanism, as in a vehicle or electric device". That is exactly the purpose of the controller in Walker et al. to regulate the buyer driven transaction. Therefore, it is improper to characterize the controller of Walker et al. as an ERP system.

Accordingly, Walker et al., which fail to disclose the same features and processes of appellants' invention for managing information (e.g., an ERP operating in a private electronic environment, retrieving data from and ERP system, managing the data in a public electronic environment offline from the private electronic environment, and registering the managed data with the private electronic environment), would not have anticipated appellants' invention as recited in independent claims 1, 26, 51, and 53. The claims depending from these independent claims are also believed allowable for the same reasons noted above from which they directly or ultimately depend, as well as for their own additional features.

Claims 19-25, 44-50, 52, and 71-76

Reversal of the rejection of claims 19-25, 44-50, 52, and 71-76 as anticipated by Walker et al. is respectfully requested.

In particular, appellants' invention as recited in these claims relate to managing the creation of a proposal. More particularly, this aspect of appellant's invention is directed to obtaining data for the proposal, for example retrieving data inherent to the contract's subject, from an Enterprise Resource Planning System in a private electronic environment, creating the proposal using a public electronic environment, and providing the proposal via the public electronic environment to the private electronic environment. None of these elements or functions is disclosed or taught in Walker et al.

As noted above, the system disclosed in Walker et al. is operated entirely in a public network, and Walker et al. fail to disclose a private electronic environment, and in particular an ERP system operating in a private environment. Walker et al. also fail to disclose obtaining data

for the proposal via a public electronic environment from an ERP system within a private electronic environment. In addition, Walker et al. fail to disclose "creating said proposal using said public electronic environment disconnected from the private electronic environment." Further, Walker et al. do not address providing the proposal, via the public electronic environment, to the private electronic environment. Nor are the various characterizations of Walker et al. regarding "ERP" and "private electronic environment" set forth in the Office Action correct for the reasons noted above.

Accordingly, Walker et al. would not have anticipated appellants' invention as recited in independent claims 19, 44, 52, and 71 for the reasons noted above. The claims depending from these independent claims are also believed allowable for the same reasons noted above from which they directly or ultimately depend, as well as for their own additional features.

Dependent claims 17, 42, and 69

In addition to the discussion noted above, in Walker et al., the controller does not fetch any information from the buyer and the seller. It receives information and administers information coming from both buyers and sellers. In appellants' invention, a server in the public electronic environment accesses data from an ERP system in the private electronic environment and selects specific information that is needed, for example, as a base for the contract. Nothing of this kind is described in the Walker et al. Thus, Walker et al. which do not disclose "pre-fetching data from said private electronic environment to be use in the managing of said information" would not have anticipated appellants' invention as recited in dependent claims 17, 42, and 69.

Dependent claims 10, 12, 35, 46, 62, and 73

In addition to the discussion noted above, another factor not addressed in Walker et al. is administration of the approval process before registering the proposal as a contract in the private electronic environment. This is typical in the case of multi-million dollar enterprise level contracts where strict approval level authorization signature processes have to be defined and

controlled to guarantee the desired level of approvals. As noted above, in Walker et al., the seller need only accept (or buyer accept counteroffer) to create the contract. Thus, Walker et al. would not have anticipated appellants' invention as recited in dependent claims 10, 12, 35, 46, 62, and 73.

For the above reasons, appellants respectfully request reversal of the anticipation rejection to claims 1-8, 10-14, 16-33, 35-39, 41-60, 62-66 and 68-78.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) Over Walker et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,794,207)

Claims 24, 49, and 75

Reversal of the rejection of claims 24, 49, and 75 as obvious over Walker et al. is respectfully requested.

As noted above, Walker et al. fail to disclose, teach or suggest, a method or system for managing information which includes "an enterprise resource planning system within a private electronic environment", identifying or obtaining information "via a public electronic environment from an enterprise resource planning system within the private electronic environment to be managed", "managing the information using the public electronic environment ... off-line from the private electronic environment", and "registering the managed information, via the public electronic environment, with the private electronic environment" as recited in the independent claims.

Moreover, Walker et al. do not address the problems associated with enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems, and in particular, the problem of managing information or negotiating contract based on data in an ERP system. In addition, Walker et al. do not disclose, teach or suggest such methods, systems, and computer products for managing information residing in an ERP system in a private electronic environment and wherein the "private electronic environment comprises a server protected by one or more fire walls" as recite in dependent claims 24, 49, and 75.

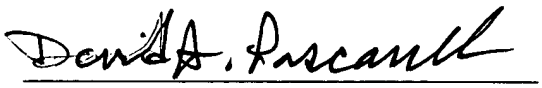
It is respectfully submitted therefore that appellants' invention, as recited in claims 24, 49, and 75, is patentable over Walker et al.

Conclusion

Appellants respectfully request reversal of the rejections set forth in the final Office Action. Appellants submit that Walker et al. would neither have anticipated nor rendered the functionality recited in their claimed invention obvious. The Walker et al. patent does not disclose, teach or suggest appellants' recited independent claims for methods, systems, and computer products for managing information or creating a proposal such as a contract which include: (1) identifying information or obtaining data for a proposal using a public electronic environment from an Enterprise Resource Planning System in a private electronic, (2) managing the information or data in a public electronic environment offline or disconnected from the private electronic environment, and (3) registering the managed information or proposal via the public electronic environment with the private electronic environment.

Accordingly, reversal of the rejections is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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Appendix

1. A method of managing information, said method comprising:

identifying information, via a public electronic environment, from an enterprise resource planning system within a private electronic environment;

managing the information using the public electronic environment, wherein one or more aspects of managing the information are performed within the public electronic environment off-line from the private electronic environment; and

registering the managed information, via the public electronic environment, with the private electronic environment.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the information comprises a proposal for a contract.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein said managing comprises creating the information.

4. The method of claim 3, wherein the information comprises a proposal for a contract, and the creating comprises entering data for the proposal.

5. The method of claim 4, further comprising obtaining one or more data from the private electronic environment to be used in creating the proposal.

6. The method of claim 4, wherein the creating further comprises negotiating one or more terms of the proposal, while disconnected from the private electronic environment.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein said managing comprises maintaining the information.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein said managing comprises obtaining status relating to the information.

9. (Canceled)

10. The method of claim 1, wherein said managing comprises requesting approval of the information, and wherein said registering is performed in response to the approval.

11. The method of claim 1, wherein said registering is performed in real-time.

12. The method of claim 1, wherein the information comprises a proposal, and wherein the registering comprises registering the proposal with the private electronic environment to form a contract.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein the managing comprises administering the contract.

14. The method of claim 1, wherein the managing comprises obtaining a report associated with the information.

15. (Canceled)

16. The method of claim 1, wherein the public electronic environment comprises a server executing a web portal.

17. The method of claim 1, further comprising pre-fetching data from said private electronic environment to be used in the managing of said information.

18. The method of claim 17, further comprising storing said data within said public electronic environment.

19. A method of managing the creation of a proposal, said method comprising:

obtaining data, via a public electronic environment, for said proposal from an enterprise resource planning system within a private electronic environment;

creating said proposal using said public electronic environment disconnected from said private electronic environment, said creating using at least a portion of the obtained data; and

providing said proposal, via said public electronic environment, to said private electronic environment.

20. The method of claim 19, further comprising approving said proposal, prior to providing said proposal to said private electronic environment.

21. The method of claim 20, wherein said providing comprises registering said proposal with said private electronic environment, subsequent to said approval, wherein said proposal becomes a contract.

22. The method of claim 19, wherein said creating said proposal comprises negotiating one or more terms of said proposal.

23. The method of claim 19, wherein said public electronic environment comprises a web server.

24. The method of claim 19, wherein said private electronic environment comprises a server protected by one or more fire walls.

25. The method of claim 19, wherein said proposal comprises a proposal for a sales contract.

26. A system of managing information, said system comprising:

information obtained via a public electronic environment from an enterprise resource planning system within a private electronic environment;

means for managing the information using the public electronic environment, wherein one or more aspects of managing the information are performed within the public electronic environment off-line from the private electronic environment; and

means, via the public electronic environment, for registering the managed information with the private electronic environment.

27. The system of claim 26, wherein the information comprises a proposal for a contract.

28. The system of claim 26, wherein said means for managing comprises means for creating the information.

29. The system of claim 28, wherein the information comprises a proposal for a contract, and the means for creating comprises means for entering data for the proposal.

30. The system of claim 29, further comprising means for obtaining one or more data from the private electronic environment to be used in creating the proposal.

31. The system of claim 29, wherein the means for creating further comprises means for negotiating one or more terms of the proposal, while disconnected from the private electronic environment.

32. The system of claim 26, wherein said means for managing comprises means for maintaining the information.

33. The system of claim 26, wherein said means for managing comprises means for obtaining status relating to the information.

34. (Canceled)

35. The system of claim 26, wherein said means for managing comprises means for requesting approval of the information, and wherein the registering is performed in response to the approval.

36. The system of claim 26, wherein the registering is performed in real-time.

37. The system of claim 26, wherein the information comprises a proposal, and wherein the means for registering comprises means for registering the proposal with the private electronic environment to form a contract.

38. The system of claim 37, wherein the means for managing comprises means for administering the contract.

39. The system of claim 26, wherein the means for managing comprises means for obtaining a report associated with the information.

40. (Canceled)

41. The system of claim 26, wherein the public electronic environment comprises a server executing a web portal.

42. The system of claim 26, further comprising means for pre-fetching data from said private electronic environment to be used in the managing of said information.

43. The system of claim 42, further comprising means for storing said data within said public electronic environment.

44. A system of managing the creation of a proposal, said system comprising:

means for obtaining data for said proposal, via a public electronic environment, from an enterprise resource planning system within a private electronic environment;

means for creating said proposal using said public electronic environment disconnected from said private electronic environment, said means for creating using at least a portion of the obtained data; and

means, via said public electronic environment, for providing said proposal to said private electronic environment.

45. The system of claim 44, further comprising means for approving said proposal, prior to providing said proposal to said private electronic environment.

46. The system of claim 45, wherein said means for providing comprises means for registering said proposal with said private electronic environment, subsequent to said approval, wherein said proposal becomes a contract.

47. The system of claim 44, wherein said means for creating said proposal comprises means for negotiating one or more terms of said proposal.

48. The system of claim 44, wherein said public electronic environment comprises a web server.

49. The system of claim 44, wherein said private electronic environment comprises a server protected by one or more fire walls.

50. The system of claim 44, wherein said proposal comprises a proposal for a sales contract.

51. A system of managing information, said system comprising:

information obtained via a public electronic environment from an enterprise resource planning system within a private electronic environment;

the public electronic environment adapted to manage the information, wherein one or more aspects of managing the information are performed within the public electronic environment off-line from the private electronic environment; and

the private electronic environment adapted to register the managed information from the public electronic environment.

52. A system of managing the creation of a proposal, said system comprising:

data for said proposal obtained via a public electronic environment from an enterprise resource planning system within a private electronic environment;

said public electronic environment adapted to create said proposal disconnected from said private electronic environment, said public electronic environment using at least a portion of the obtained data; and

said private electronic environment adapted to receive the proposal from the public electronic environment,.

53. At least one program storage device readable by a machine, tangibly embodying at least one program of instructions executable by the machine to perform a method of managing information, said method comprising:

identifying information, via a public electronic environment, from an enterprise resource planning system within a private electronic environment;

managing the information using the public electronic environment, wherein one or more aspects of managing the information are performed within the public electronic environment off-line from the private electronic environment; and

registering, via the public electronic environment, the information with the private electronic environment.

54. The at least one program storage device of claim 53, wherein the information comprises a proposal for a contract.

55. The at least one program storage device of claim 53, wherein said managing comprises creating the information.

56. The at least one program storage device of claim 55, wherein the information comprises a proposal for a contract, and the creating comprises entering data for the proposal.

57. The at least one program storage device of claim 56, wherein said method further comprises obtaining one or more data from the private electronic environment to be used in creating the proposal.

58. The at least one program storage device of claim 56, wherein the creating further comprises negotiating one or more terms of the proposal, while disconnected from the private electronic environment.

59. The at least one program storage device of claim 53, wherein said managing comprises maintaining the information.

60. The at least one program storage device of claim 53, wherein said managing comprises obtaining status relating to the information.

61. (Canceled)

62. The at least one program storage device of claim 53, wherein said managing comprises requesting approval of the information, and wherein said registering is performed in response to the approval.

63. The at least one program storage device of claim 53, wherein said registering is performed in real-time.

64. The at least one program storage device of claim 53, wherein the information comprises a proposal, and wherein the registering comprises registering the proposal with the private electronic environment to form a contract.

65. The at least one program storage device of claim 64, wherein the managing comprises administering the contract.

66. The at least one program storage device of claim 53, wherein the managing comprises obtaining a report associated with the information.

67. (Canceled)

68. The at least one program storage device of claim 53, wherein the public electronic environment comprises a server executing a web portal.

69. The at least one program storage device of claim 53, wherein said method further comprises pre-fetching data from said private electronic environment to be used in the managing of said information.

70. The at least one program storage device of claim 69, wherein said method further comprises storing said data within said public electronic environment.

71. An article of manufacture, comprising:

at least one computer usable medium having computer readable program code means embodied therein for causing the managing of the creation of a proposal, the computer readable program code means in said article of manufacture comprising:

computer readable program code means for causing a computer to obtain data for said proposal, via a public electronic environment, from an enterprise resource planning system within a private electronic environment;

computer readable program code means for causing a computer to create said proposal using said public electronic environment disconnected from said private electronic environment, said computer readable program code means for causing a computer to create using at least a portion of the obtained data; and

computer readable program code means for causing a computer to provide said proposal, via said public electronic environment, to said private electronic environment.

72. The article of manufacture of claim 71, further comprising computer readable program code means for causing a computer to approve said proposal, prior to providing said proposal to said private electronic environment.

73. The article of manufacture of claim 72, wherein said computer readable program code means for causing a computer to provide comprises computer readable program code means for causing a computer to register said proposal with said private electronic environment, subsequent to said approval, wherein said proposal becomes a contract.

74. The article of manufacture of claim 71, wherein said public electronic environment comprises a web server.

75. The article of manufacture of claim 71, wherein said private electronic environment comprises a server protected by one or more fire walls.

76. The article of manufacture of claim 71, wherein said proposal comprises a proposal for a sales contract.

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